

have likely alienated by the utterances I gave to the press last night concerning the sinking of the *Lusitania*, but I cannot help it if we lose the case. There is a principle here at stake which is far more vital to the American people than my personal welfare is to me."

He had not consulted his counsel on the subject for the reason, as he explained subsequently, that he had decided on his course and did not wish to be in the position of having to go counter to their advice in case they recommended silence. The self-sacrificing patriotism of his utterances

needs no comment. His counsel spoke of it ever afterwards as the most courageous act they had ever known—the

supreme revelation of Roosevelt's character.

To his first condemnation of Germany's conduct he added others, day by day, steadily increasing in vigor. On May 8, 1915, he prepared a fuller statement which was published as follows on May 9:

"On the night of the day that the disaster occurred I called the attention of our people to the fact that the sinking of the *Lusitania* was not only an act of piracy, but that it represented piracy accompanied by murder on a vaster scale than any old-time pirate had ever practiced before being hung for his misdeeds.

"I called attention to the fact that this was merely the application on the high seas, and, at our expense, of the principles which when applied on land had produced the innumerable hideous tragedies that have occurred in Belgium and in Northern France.

"I said that not only our duty to humanity at large, but

our duty to preserve our own national self-respect demanded instant action on our part and forbade all delay. I can do little more than reiterate what I then said.

"When the German decree establishing the war zone was issued, and of course plainly threatened exactly the type of tragedy which has occurred, our Government notified Germany that in the event of any such wrongdoing at the expense of our citizens we would hold the German Government to 'a strict accountability.'